

CIA/OBGI PN 62.2116/1

SECRET/NFD--DISTRIBUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION

Approved For Release 2001/12/05 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000600030005-4

CIA 18JAN74

01 OF 01

CIA/DCI PN 62.2116/1

18 January 1974

25X1A

MEMORANDUM FOR:

OCI

SUBJECT : Distribution of the Palestinian Population

INTRODUCTION

MICROFILMED

1. A Palestinian is defined here as any Arabic speaking person who lives in or comes from the area known as Palestine under the British Mandate. Today this includes Israel and the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Jordan and Gaza Strip. The great majority of them are Moslem, while most of the remainder are Christian. At present they number approximately 2,900,000, about one-half of whom are under Israeli rule.

2. Until 1948 Palestinians lived in the political entity known as the Mandate of Palestine under a British administrator. They were identified as British subjects, although they did not hold British citizenship. The Mandate had its own currency, stamps, laws, and local government. When Israel was created, its Jewish and some of its Arab inhabitants became citizens of the new state of Israel. The approximately 1,300,000 Palestinian Arabs who fled were left with no recognized citizenship status. Within the next decade, Palestinians who remained in Jordan were granted Jordanian citizenship; the others have remained stateless persons, living in "host" countries on sufferance. Syria, while refusing them citizenship, granted them many citizenship rights; but Palestinians can not vote or own property in Syria. Lebanon was reluctant to offer citizenship to the large number of Moslem Palestine refugees living within its borders for fear they would destroy the balance between the country's Christians and Moslems. Egypt kept most of the Palestinians under its jurisdiction in the tiny Gaza enclave, which it governed as a separate entity.

7

2

3. Almost half of all known Palestinians are UNRWA-registered refugees, living in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the Israeli-occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. Some 510,000 of their number live in UNRWA camps or emergency camps*. When they can, the refugees live with relatives rather than in the camps and go to the camps for rations, education and medical facilities.

4. UNRWA's strict interpretation of the definition of a refugee as one who lost both his home and livelihood in 1948 excluded many Palestinians; thus the UNRWA refugee statistics do not include the self-supporting Palestinians in exile. Their figures for the number of registered refugees are considered a little high: UNRWA records state that the statistics do not necessarily reflect the actual refugee population owing to factors such as unreported deaths, false registrations or undetected absences.

5. More than 400,000 of the Arabs who fled Israel in 1948 did not become UNRWA refugees because they were able to find work elsewhere. Since that time, many more who were initially UNRWA refugees have become self-supporting and so have had their names removed from UNRWA's rolls. Authorities estimate that both groups and their offspring total over one million. It is virtually impossible to enumerate or even to identify Palestinians once they acquire Jordanian or Lebanese citizenship. The following paragraphs represent the results of recent attempts to determine the current distribution of Palestinians.

* Emergency camps were established by UNRWA in Syria to accommodate some 8,000 UNRWA refugees who left the Golan Heights in June 1967 and in Jordan to house some 80,000 of the Palestinians who fled eastward from the West Bank and from the camps in the area immediately east of the Jordan River in the summer of 1967.

EAST JORDAN

6. The NIS estimated that in mid-1972 about 862,000 Palestinians lived on the East Bank of Jordan. Over two-thirds of them are UNRWA-registered refugees, of which 40 percent reside in camps. Accurate information on the number and location of East Bank Jordan's Palestinians is not available because the census figures are not reliable, there are discrepancies in the UNRWA refugee roles, and many Palestinians become Jordanian citizens in 1950, when the West Bank became part of Jordan.

LEBANON

7. Lebanon has some 180,000 registered refugees, over half of whom live in UNRWA camps. There are many Palestinians -- mostly Christians -- in Lebanon who are not registered refugees. The NIS estimates their number at 40,000; the Department of State estimates their number at between 60,000 and 70,000.

SYRIA

8. Syria harbors about 173,000 Palestinians, 50,000 of whom live in refugee camps. UNRWA operates in Syria, but its administration is limited in many cases by the lack of cooperation on the part of the Syrian Government. Recently the Syrians have started helping UNRWA rectify its roles by reporting deaths, prolonged absences, and marriages of refugee women to non-refugee men.

EGYPT

9. There are some 33,000 Palestinians in Egypt, most of whom are refugees of the 1948 war. There are about 3,000 registered refugees who fled the Gaza Strip in June 1967. UNRWA does not operate in Egypt, but it gives the Egyptian Government money for these registered refugees.

SECRET
NO FORN DISSEM

ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORY

10. In November 1971 the Israelis estimated the number of Palestinians on the West Bank to be about 700,000 of whom about 72,000 to 74,000 lived in East Jerusalem. The American Consul in Jerusalem noted that the Israeli government would certainly not inflate this particular set of statistics and that any inaccuracies are probably on the low side.

11. The Israeli census of 1967 listed 356,000 as the total population in the Gaza Strip. Since then, the Israelis have combined the figures for the Gaza Strip and North Sinai. Some transfers of population outside the strip have occurred. By August 18, 1971 about 2,000 refugees had been resettled in Sinai, near Al Arish; about 100 others had been moved to near Jenin, on the West Bank.

ISRAEL PROPER

12. The 340,000 Palestinians now in Israel are those who remained after the cease-fire in 1948. They have been assimilated into the economy and have acquired Israeli citizenship, with all its rights except the right to serve in the armed forces. Among these non-Jews, only the Druse have been allowed to volunteer for the armed forces.


SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, AND OTHER COUNTRIES

13. Arab sources estimate that some 100,000 Palestinians work in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq -- primarily in the oil fields -- and that some 50,000 other Palestinians live elsewhere in the world. These cannot be specifically identified as Palestinians because their passports and citizenships are usually Jordanian.

THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION CENSUS

14. In 1970 the Palestino Liberation Organization Research Centro in Beirut began a census of Palestinians to learn their precise numbers, their whereabouts, and their educational and professional levels. The initial findings of this census were published in the Journal of Palestino Studies, Winter 1972. This census is the only attempt to count Palestinians worldwide. It should be used with reserve; although such an organization might be expected to inflate its figures, some Palestinians in Arab countries (Algeria has an estimated 5,000) are not listed in this PLO census-based article.

25X1A


Chief, Middle East/Africa/
Western Hemisphere Branch
Geography Division

Attachments

- Table 1. UNRWA's Distribution of Total Registered Refugee Population and of Camp Population on 30 June 1973.
- Table 2. Recent Censuses and Estimates of the Palestinian Population.

(U) FOREIGN DISSEM

Table 1

UNRWA's Distribution of Total Registered Refugee
Population and of Camp Population on 30 June 1973*

		Number living in camps:	
		Established	Emergency
East Jordan ¹	568,170	110,781	118,046
West Bank	283,430	73,294	-
Gaza Strip	327,629	199,255	-
Lebanon	187,529	94,621	-
Syria ²	<u>173,936</u>	<u>32,361</u>	<u>15,735</u>
Total	1,540,694	510,312	133,781

* Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 1 July 1972--30 June 1973, Table 7, p.79.

¹ East Jordan camps include 45,000 others displaced as a result of the June 1967 hostilities or subsequent fighting in the Jordan valley in early 1968.

² Does not include the Syrians displaced from the Golan Heights during the 1967 War.

(U) FOREIGN DISSEM

Table 2

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

Recent Censuses and Estimates of the Palestinian Population

	Israeli Censuses	NIS Estimates	UNRWA Registered Refugees (1973)	PLO Census ¹ (1970)	Other Sources
East Jordan		862,295 (mid-1972)	568,170	900,000	
West Bank	624,800 (Nov. 72) (exc. Jerusalem)		283,430		670,000 ²
Gaza Strip	356,261 (1967)		327,629	364,000	
Israel	458,500 (1971) (inc. Jerusalem)				340,000 ³
Lebanon			187,529	240,000	300,000 ⁴
Syria		175,000 (1970)	173,936	155,000	
Kuwait		77,712 (1965)		140,000	
Egypt		15,000 (1960)			33,000 ⁵
Saudi Arabia					20,000 ⁶
Persian Gulf States				15,000	
West Germany				15,000	
----					11,000 ⁷